

excellency of speech or wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God. For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified. And I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling.

And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the spirit and of power; that your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God, I Cor. 2:1-5. May our preachers thus preach, and our faith thus stand, and to God be all the praise.

#### IS IT SIN TO DISBELIEVE GOD?

MARY DIETZ

In this age of hobby-riders and cranks so-called, one almost fears to offer thoughts differing from that generally believed. Satan in his craftiness does nothing more subtle than stamping the bearer of a righteous thought with an unpopular name. Thus he in a measure injures that which might otherwise benefit popular belief.

Bible truth is accepted by some church or organization and stamped by others as belonging to the one who believes or obeyed it, instead of still honoring it as a part of God's word. Man scarcely dares to accept that which he believes to be Christ's teachings if it differs from the general belief of the church of which he is a member. These things cause many to not search for light as they would otherwise and cause many to disobey, even in that which they do believe is God's will. Brethren, should these things be? How can God's children ever come to a unity of the faith in that way? Surely God's will must be prized above all else.

Thought coming from an humble source may be truth. Does any one organization hold to all the truth? Do not some have more than others? Does any one person have the right conception of all truth revealed to man? Surely if there are such it is they who learn *wholly* at Jesus' feet.

The writer thanks God for the Brethren church. We believe, as a rule, its members are open to conviction and feel at liberty to accept light that proves itself to be truth. Oh, that every professor of Christianity might pray daily, as the writer wishes to: "Lord guide every thought, give wisdom and lead us by thy blessed Holy Spirit to the way, the truth, and the light." Oh, that we might ever realize the privilege of believing and obeying God.

Is not believing and obeying identical? Is not unbelief one form of disobedience? Was mankind ever benefitted spiritually by any unbelief or disobedience? Did God's first child in Eden believe him? Did he obey him? All along the ages has any one ever really been blessed by unbelief or by disbelieving God's laws? Since sin is in the world, since man chose unbelief rather than obedience, God uses sin to bring about his plans. Could man in his fallen or even in his regenerate condition comprehend any other way of working? Anything else would

seem as miracles to us. Did not God have a plan in view for his children in which he cannot be disappointed? Mankind, forever unsaved, will be disappointed, but God will not or cannot be. God wanted a people as his very own. He is going to have them. Will not the saints in their glorified condition, as the bride of Christ, be just what they would have been had man never disbelieved in or disobeyed God? Had not the testing time come and would not God have crowned man with new spiritual life and heavenly wisdom for belief, instead of death for unbelief? Let the reader think of something that is impossible with God, excepting to break his own laws. Does God's law permit him to overrule the will of man? Is man a free moral agent and has he always been such? Think of man without the power to exercise or control his own will in Eden or elsewhere. Think how incapable he would be of enjoying even God's blessings, simply as a machine. Did the part of the human family who will be forever unsaved gain anything by the first unbelief? Think whether it was man or God that lost by the first disobedience. Dear reader, does not man have to pass thru sorrow and suffering, the result of sin, to gain that which might have been given him by the *power of God* without sin? Think of the millions who will be forever unsaved as a result of the first unbelief. Think of the value of just one soul and that these are lost as a result of man's choice, not as a result of God's law obeyed. God said man would die if he disobeyed. He did die to all that was godly, in so much that he cannot grasp the spiritual things of God without first being regenerated or born again. Man lost God's spirit. He must return and receive it. Satan said man would become wise. He did become wise, oh, so wise in worldly things that he cannot even grasp real wisdom, (the beauty of the fear of God) without being made anew. Unbelief is sin. Sin leads away from God. Separation from God is death. God has all power, but he cannot break his own laws and sway the wills of men, compelling them to accept salvation, tho he rejoices not in the loss of one soul. Think of the result of natural laws broken. Man suffers loss every time he even breaks one of these. Dear reader, think you that mankind will ever know the result of disbelieving God and disobeying even one of his laws until the mysteries of one broken law, (that in Eden), have been revealed.

Life is clouded in mystery. Death is clothed in mystery, but how can it be otherwise? Man has put upon himself eye glasses made of clay. Tho he returns to God and has them cleared by the blood of Jesus Christ applied, yet he must wear them until he sleeps the last, long sleep, or until Christ comes, and the mists have cleared away.

Oh, that mankind could only see that he belongs to God. That he may return to him, thru Christ, and become one with him. Man cannot be complete without his Maker. To believe, obey and love him is the highest

wisdom. May every soul return to him and say, "Lord, I will not disbelieve thee and suffer loss. Take me as thine own, I am thine."

#### ESCHATOLOGY

B. C. MOOMAW

This is the doctrine of the last things; death, judgment, destiny. Solemn and awful and infinite are its verities, for it is the reaping of what we have sown, the summing up of all our thoughts and acts, that which we are and that which we do. It is the tremendous crisis of destiny, the crucible of fate, the fulcrum of eternity. No wonder that thoughts of death and judgment startle guilt with unspeakable terror. An angel, tho fortified with perfect innocence, might shrink from this supreme test.

What is death? Philosophers and sages in all lands and in all ages have attempted to answer that question, and yet the generations as they come ask it again and again: What is death? Science has attempted to answer it; religion has attempted to answer it, but they only make us understand the fact, not the mystery. In the presence of that mystery we stand confounded and helpless. Jesus said that death was a sleep. But we do not understand the mystery of sleep. We only know it as a blessed fact, a sweet rest, a surcease of sorrow, forgetfulness of care, release from affliction. How blessed is sleep, a gift of God. How blessed to be "asleep in Jesus."

But after death comes the judgment. Think of the juncture of these words: Death; After; Judgment. What morning is there to that slumber of the dead? And then think of that Judge who sits there in the awful looming shadow of doom, invisible in the dim and dreadful shadow of impending eternity; or else flashing the white light of perfect knowledge upon every secret sin, upon every hidden iniquity. What courage can face that awful Judge? At his girdle are the keys of life and death. Enter thou mortal man, thou feeble worm, thou weakling of the dust, thou lover of sin, and stand before that Judge. An echo comes out of the thick darkness, and we catch its articulate sounds: "For the great day of his wrath is come, and who shall be able to stand."

Nothing can escape the penetrating scrutiny of that final judgment. "According to the deeds done in the body." It is a review. Pass on beneath the dreadful frown of eternal righteousness thou long procession of sins. The days and the years unfold their sinister record of thoughts, of unrighteousness, of purposes, plans, desires, transgressions, iniquities, marching before the Judge, on, and on, and on, innumerable, bewildering, maddening. And yet this is not the end. There follow the legitimate *harvests* of these sins, their thirty fold, and sixty fold and hundred fold, which they have borne to the sower in all the years of his sowing. See them rolling in upon that soul standing at the Judgment. Mountains and whirlwinds, and angry seas rush out of the realms of